REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are requested.

The specification has been reviewed and revised to make editorial changes thereto and generally improve the form thereof, and a substitute specification is provided. No new matter has been added by the substitute specification. Also, an abstract has been provided.

By the current Amendment, claims 1-13 have been canceled and claims 14-33 have been added. New claims 14-33 have been drafted taking into account the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, issues raised by the Examiner, are believed to be free of these issues, and are otherwise believed to be in compliance with 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

The instant invention pertains to a connecting device for a pipe, wherein the connecting device includes a coupling body and a clamping collar which is receivable within the coupling body. The clamping collar includes an arresting tongue such that when a pipe is received within the clamping collar, and the clamping collar and pipe are slid in a direction so as to become disengaged from the coupling body, the arresting tongue is displaced so as to grip the pipe and prevent the pipe from being removed from the clamping collar. Such a connecting device is generally known in the art, but suffers from drawbacks as expressed on pages 1-2 of the original specification. Applicants have addressed and resolved these drawbacks by providing a unique connecting device.

Specifically, with reference to Figs. 2 and 3, for example, Applicants' inventive connecting device comprises a coupling body 1 having an inner wall 10, a stop 5, a substantially cylindrical recess 3 having an inlet 7, and a sloped surface 9 extending radially inwardly from the inner wall in a direction toward the inlet. The connecting device further comprises a clamping collar 2 having at an inner end thereof at least one radially displaceable arresting tongue 6. The clamping collar is receivable within the substantially cylindrical recess and, when received within the substantially cylindrical recess at an axially inner starting position, is for slidably receiving a pipe 4 until one end of the pipe abuts the stop, such that when the pipe is slid away from the stop in a direction toward the inlet, along with the clamping collar being slid in the direction toward

the inlet from the axially inner starting position to an axially outer arresting position, an outer side of the at least one radially displaceable arresting tongue cooperates with the sloped surface so as to be displaced radially into engagement with an outer wall surface 11 of the pipe. The clamping collar is divided into an axially inner function section 2A and an axially outer actuation section 2B, and a seal 25 is positioned between facing front sides of the axially inner function section and the axially outer actuation section, wherein the seal is for sealing against the inner wall of the coupling body and against the outer wall surface of the pipe. The axially inner function section has the at least one radially displaceable arresting tongue.

New claim 14 is believed to be representative of Applicants' inventive connecting device.

Claims 1-8, 11 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Francis, and claims 9, 10 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Francis. Francis is not applicable with regard to the currently presented claims for the following reasons.

Initially, please note that claim 14 includes the subject matter added by former claim 8, and accordingly, Francis will be discussed as it pertains to the rejection of former claim 8.

Former claim 8 and new claim 14 each require a connecting device that comprises

> a coupling body having an inner wall, a stop, a substantially cylindrical recess having an inlet, and a sloped surface extending radially inwardly from said inner wall in a direction toward said inlet; and
>
> a clamping collar having at an inner end thereof at least one radially displaceable arresting tongue, with said clamping collar being receivable within said substantially cylindrical recess and for, when received within said substantially cylindrical recess at an axially inner starting position, slidably receiving a pipe until one end of the pipe abuts said stop,
>
> such that when the pipe is slid away from said stop in a direction toward said inlet, along with said clamping collar being slid in the direction toward said inlet from the axially inner starting position to an axially outer arresting position, an outer side of said at least one radially displaceable arresting tongue cooperates with said sloped surface so as to be displaced radially into engagement with an outer wall surface of the pipe,
>
> **wherein said clamping collar is divided into an axially inner function section and an axially outer actuation section,**

> **with a seal positioned between facing front sides of said axially inner function section and said axially outer actuation section, said seal for sealing *against said inner wall and against the outer wall surface of the pipe*,** and with said axially inner function section having said at least one radially displaceable arresting tongue.

Such a connecting device is not taught or suggested by Francis.

In this regard, in supporting the rejection of claim 8, the Examiner took the position that thimble member or clamping collar 4 of Francis is divided into an axially inner function section (from 4 to 20 in Fig. 1) and an axially outer actuation section (from 4 to flanged end in Fig. 1), with an O-ring seal 5 or 6 being disposed between front faces of the function section and actuation section which face one another, which O-ring seal forms a seal against the inner wall surface of fitting or coupling body 1 and against the outer wall surface of pipe 2. This position is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Initially, the clamping collar 4 of Francis is shown to be a one-piece clamping collar, and is not described to be divided into an axially inner function section and an axially outer actuation section. Thus, for this reason alone claim 14 is not anticipated by Francis.

Additionally, assuming *arguendo* that the clamping collar of Francis can be construed to include an axially inner function section and an axially outer actuation section, as proposed by the Examiner, claim 14 remains not anticipated by Francis. In this regard, claim 14 specifically requires that the seal is for sealing ***against the inner wall of the coupling body and against the outer wall surface of the pipe***. To the contrary, the only O-ring of Francis that can arguably be said to be positioned between facing sides of those sections that the Examiner has equated to the claimed function section and actuation section is O-ring 6; however, O-ring 6 seals against an inner surface of the clamping collar and an outer surface of the pipe, but does not seal against an inner wall of the coupling body and an outer surface of the pipe. And, O-ring seal 5 seals against an inner wall of the coupling body and an outer surface of the clamping collar. Accordingly, because Francis does not disclose or suggest a seal that seals against an inner wall of the coupling body and an outer surface of the pipe, while positioned between facing sides of any two members, claim 14 is not anticipated by Francis.

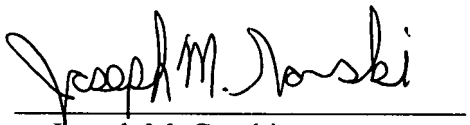
Thus, claims 14-33 are allowable.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and an early Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

If after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner believes that any issues remain which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's undersigned representative by telephone to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Zdravko PALUNCIC

By: 

Joseph M. Gorski
Registration No. 46,500
Attorney for Applicant

JMG/ra/nka
Washington, D.C. 20006-1021
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
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